Early Learning Challenge Grant

Overview of Criteria
And Illinois' Approach

July 2011

Theresa Hawley, Ph.D.

Early Learning Challenge Grant

I. Grant Purpose & Priorities

II. Framework for Understanding RTT-ELC

III. Grant Criteria

IV. Illinois' Competitive Status

    a. Successful State Systems

    b. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

    c. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

    d. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

V. Process & Timeline

Purpose of the ELC Grant

- Provide more children from birth to age five from low-income families with access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs

- Support breakthrough work that dramatically improves the quality of Early Learning and Development programs serving High-Need Children

What is a Early Learning & Development Program?

Any provider, regardless of setting or funding source that provides ECE from birth to K entry, including, but not limited to:

- Child care centers & family child care homes
- Preschool programs (incl. EI & Special Ed)
- Early Head Start & Head Start
- Non-relative providers caring for 2 or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting

Grant Priorities—Must Haves

- ELD Standards and
  K Entry Assessments

- Tiered Quality Rating &
  Improvement System

- All ELD Programs in the
  Tiered QRIS

Additional Grant Priorities

- Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades

- Encouraging Private Sector Support

*Courage, commitment, capacity and creativity*

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Early Childhood Systems

Comprehensive health services that meet children's vision, hearing, nutrition, behavioral, and oral health as well as medical health needs.

Early Learning

Early care and education opportunities in nurturing environments where children can learn what they need to succeed in school and life.

Health, Mental Health and Nutrition

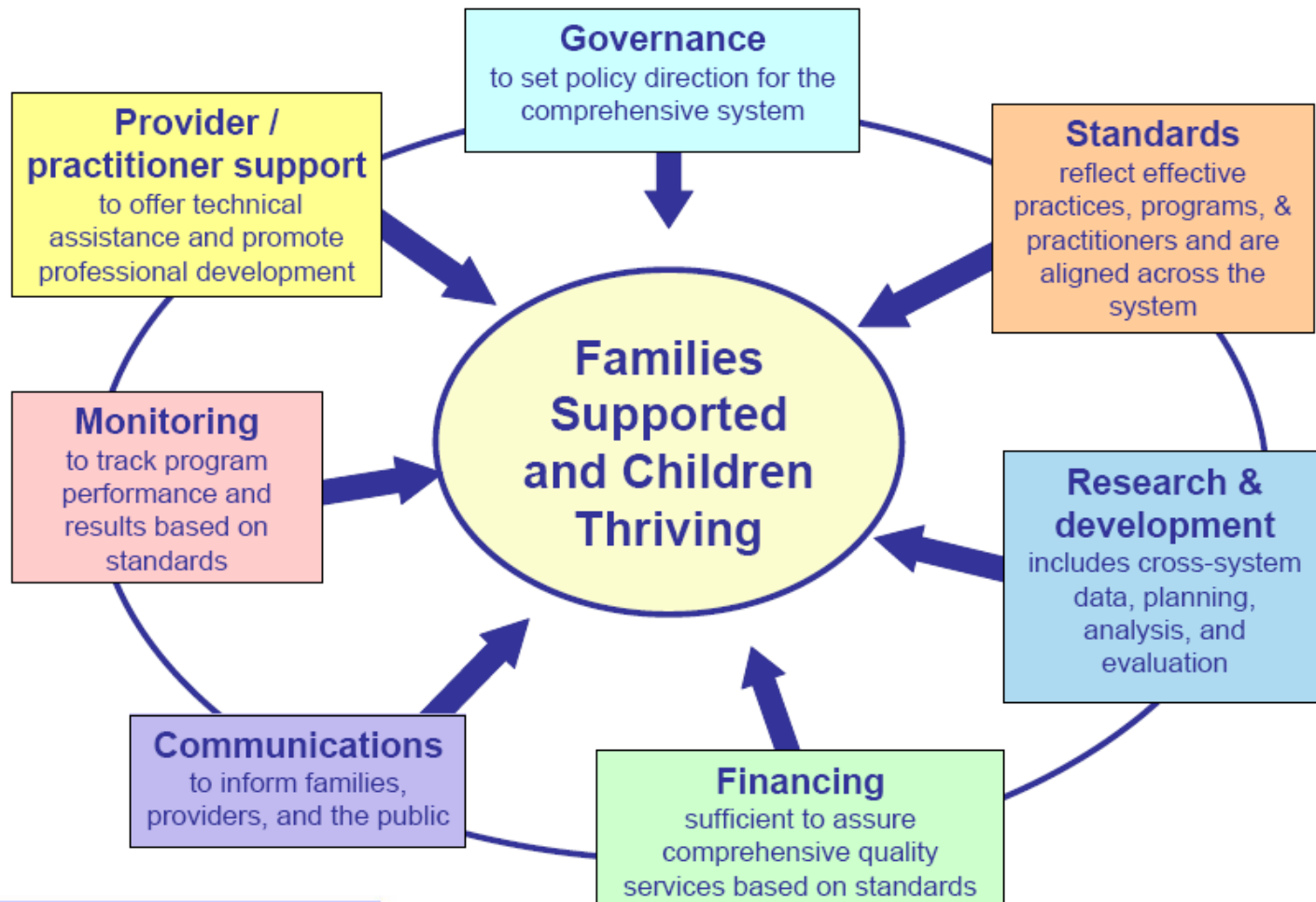**Family Support**

Special Needs/ Early Intervention
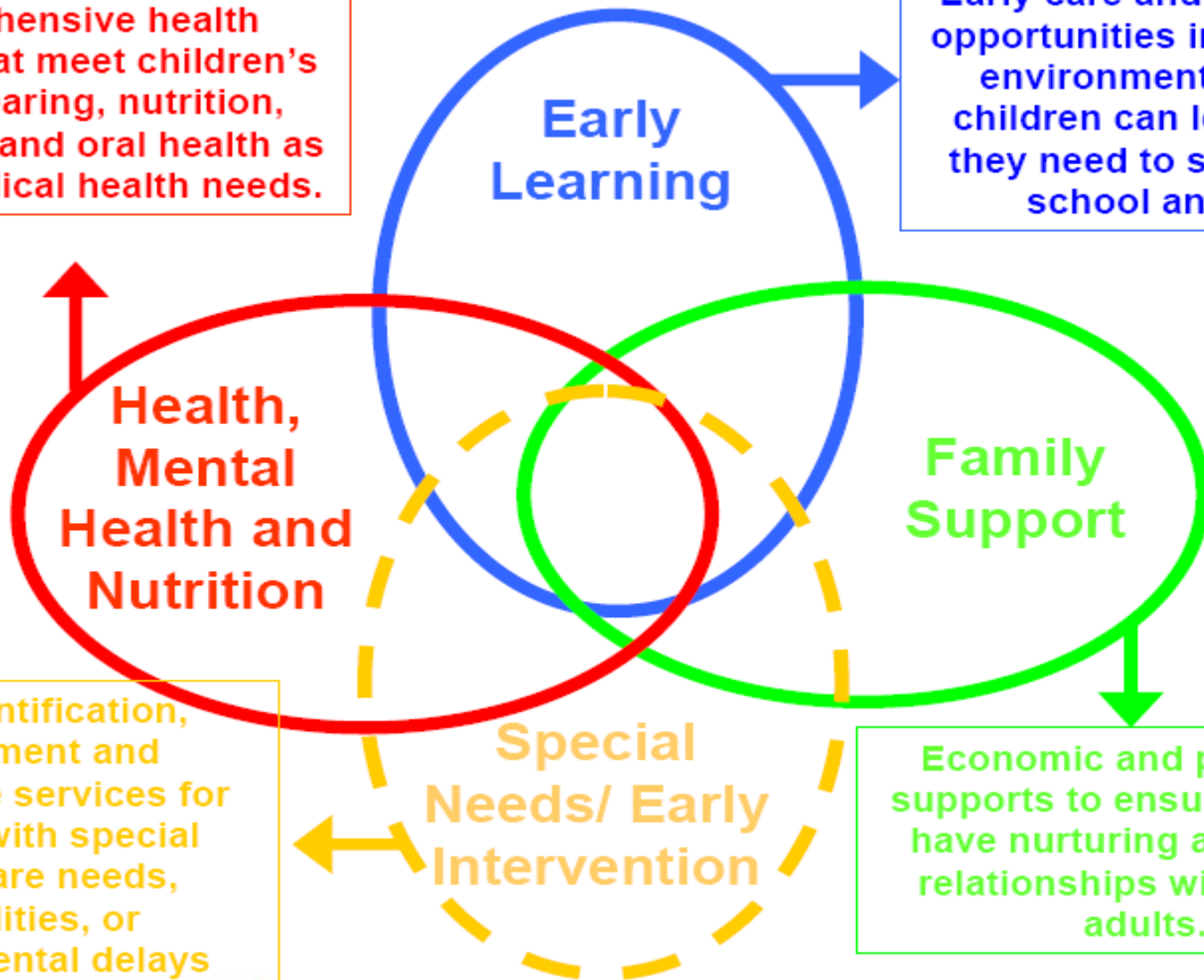
Early identification, assessment and appropriate services for children with special health care needs, disabilities, or developmental delays

**Economic and parenting supports to ensure children have nurturing and stable relationships with caring adults.**

Early Childhood Systems Working Group

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What We've Been Working On

Core Elements of an Early Childhood Development System

Governance to set policy direction for the comprehensive system

Provider / practitioner support to offer technical assistance and promote professional development

Standards reflect effective practices, programs, & practitioners and are aligned across the system

Monitoring to track program performance and results based on standards

Families Supported and Children Thriving

Research & development includes cross-system data, planning, analysis, and evaluation

Communications to inform families, providers, and the public

Financing sufficient to assure comprehensive quality services based on standards

Early Childhood Systems Working Group

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What's Different??
Standards-Driven Approach

- Focus on developing, implementing and maintaining standards that support a quality system

- Standards are statements that are used as a basis of comparison in measuring quality, value, or quantity.
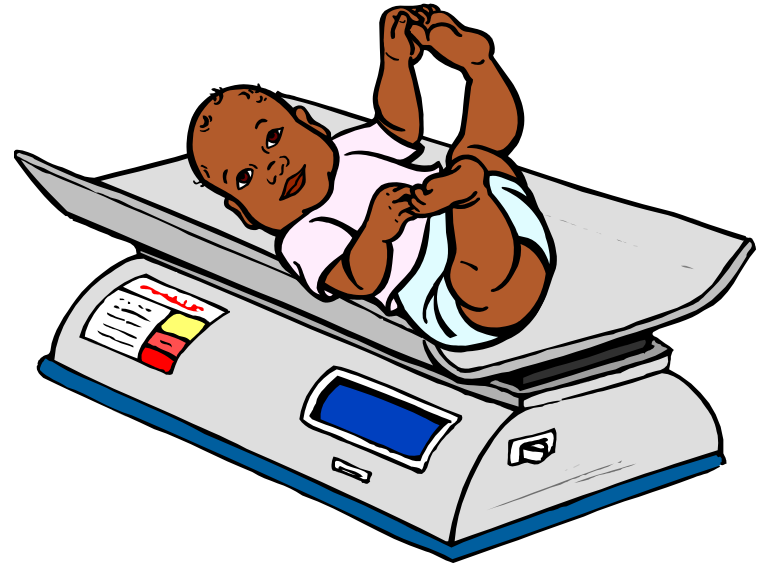
Why Standards?

- Precision
- Clarity
- Consensus Opportunity
- Base for measurement
- Goal = More equitable outcomes

Buckets of Standards
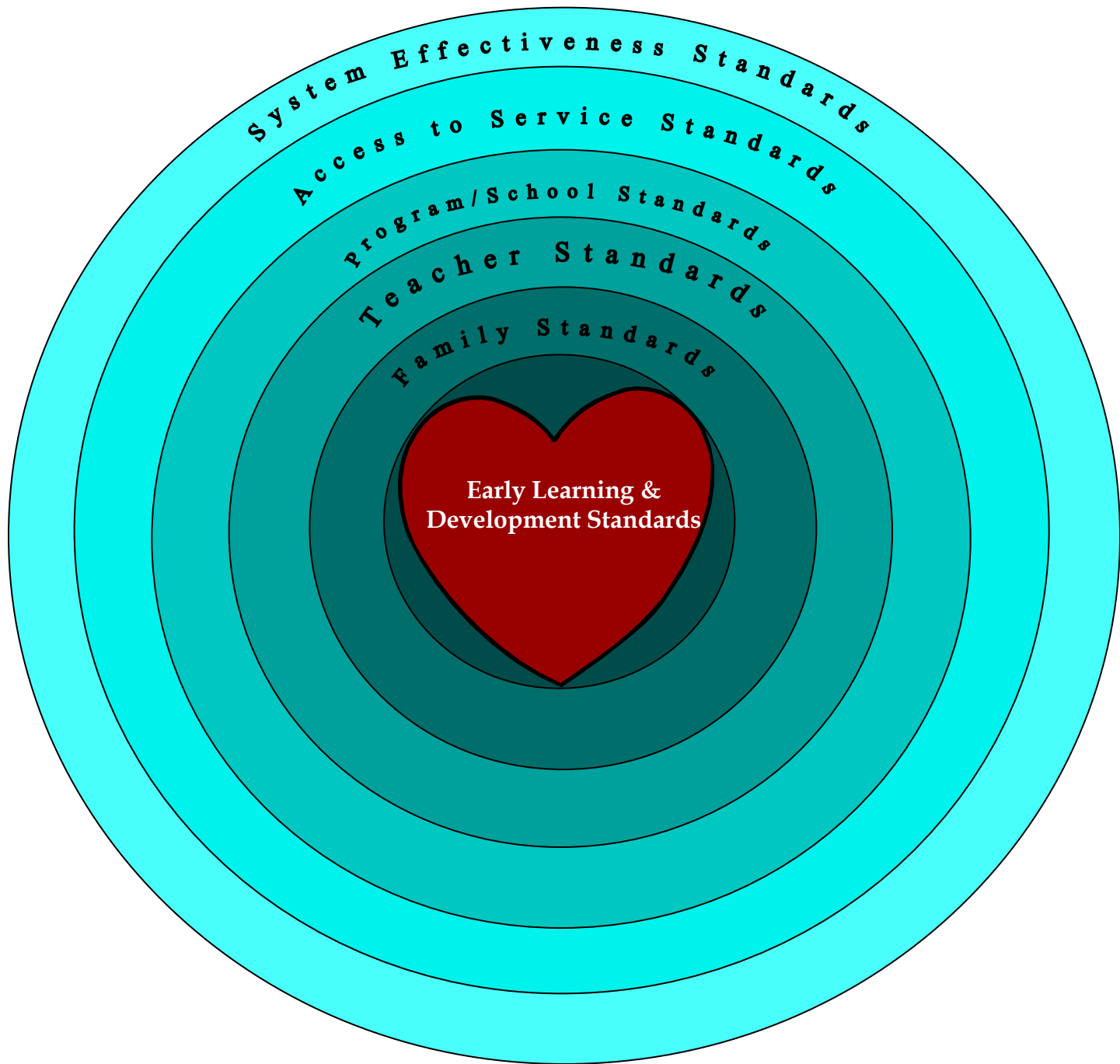
I.

Early Learning & Development Standards

II.

III.

IV.

V.

VI.

System Effectiveness Standards

Access to Service Standards

Program/School Standards

Teacher Standards

Family Standards

Early Learning & Development Standards

Heart of the Matter:

Standards that specify what children know and can do

I.

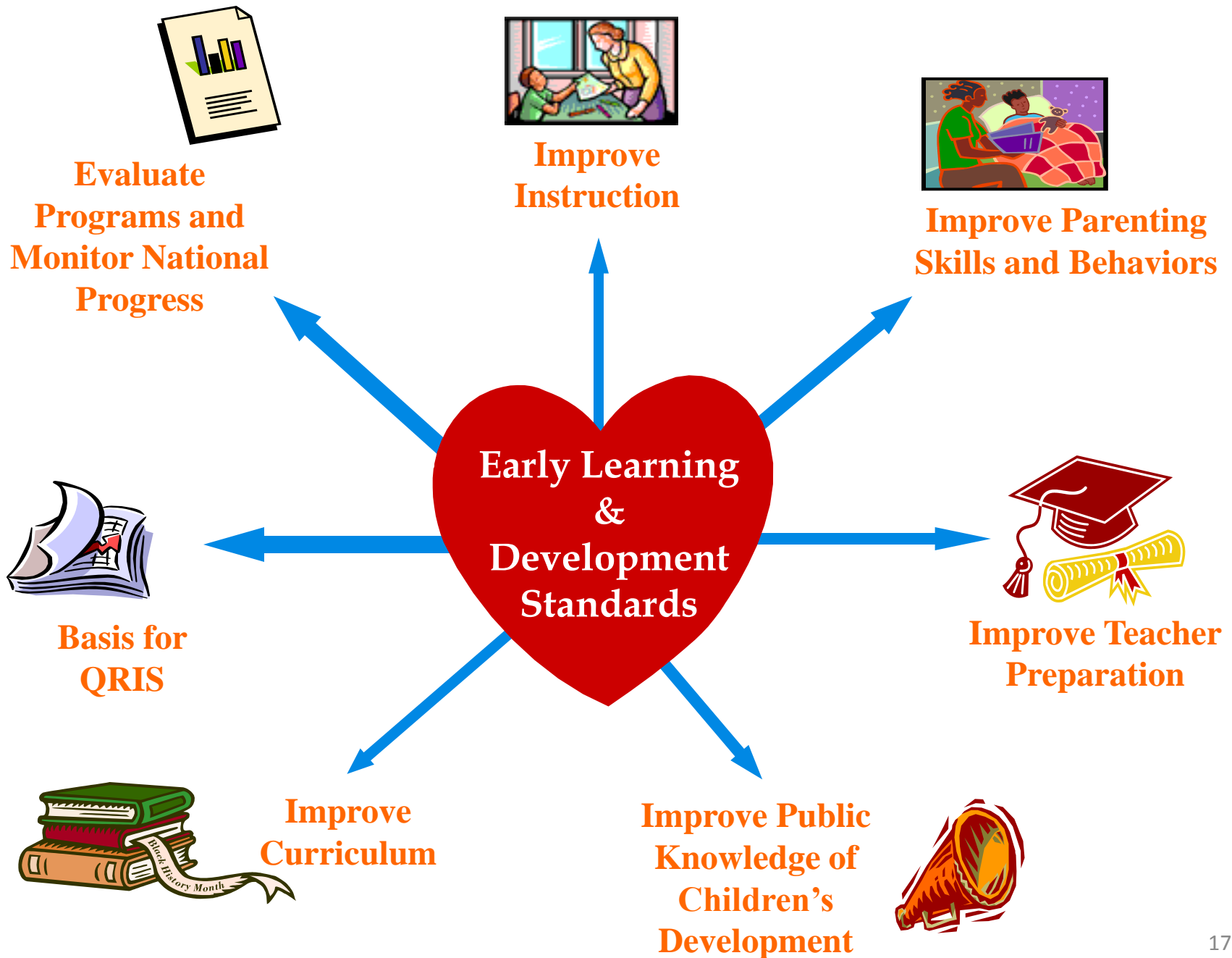**Early Learning &
Development Standards**

What are Early Learning and Development Standards?

Observable, measurable statements of what we expect children to know, do, and be, in the areas of:

- – Physical Health, Well-Being, and Motor Development
- – Social and Emotional Development
- – Approaches Toward Learning
- – Language, Literacy, and Communication
- – Cognition and General Knowledge

What Difference will Early Learning and Development Standards make in Advancing an Early Learning and Development System?

Evaluate Programs and Monitor National Progress

Improve Instruction

Improve Parenting Skills and Behaviors

Early Learning & Development Standards

Basis for QRIS

Improve Teacher Preparation

Improve Curriculum

Improve Public Knowledge of Children's Development

What the Grant Requires Us to Do

- Develop great ELD Standards for Birth to 5
- Implement effective child assessments that are aligned with those standards:
  - Within programs (screening, formative assessment)
  - Kindergarten assessment
- Use those assessments to inform practice at all levels
  - Individual student, classroom & program levels
  - As a whole system

What the Grant Requires Us to Do

- Create common, statewide system of tiered Program Standards that:
  - Cover <u>all</u> types of ELD Programs
  - Include support for health, mental health
  - Include family engagement
- Implement/Monitor Program Standards through a Quality Rating & Improvement System

What the Grant Requires Us to Do

- Define Workforce Knowledge & Competencies and relate these to ELD Standards

- Align Professional Development system (including incentives) for all ELD staff to the defined Knowledge & Competencies

- Align higher education in ECE to the defined Knowledge & Competencies

What the Grant Requires Us to Do

- Develop the infrastructure needed to support this whole effort
  - Governance
  - Data System
  - Repurposing/reallocating existing funding streams (federal, state & local) to support this new approach

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Illinois Today

Strengths	Challenges
Structures in place: ELC & OECD	Alignment: IDHS, ISBE & IDCFS

Illinois Today

Strengths	Challenges
Child care licensing, QRS, PFA, & HS program standards alignment underway	Develop a coherent set of tiered standards that includes all types of programs Strengthen inclusion of family engagement, health & mental health in program standards

Illinois Today

Strengths	Challenges
Illinois is a national leader in the development of workforce credentials that are standards-driven and linked to Higher Ed systems	Include Gateways credentials in QRS and tiered Program Standards Develop staff credentials in Family Support and perhaps Home Visiting

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Winning the Challenge: Next Steps

July 26 – (approx) August 19:

- **Coordinate** with ELC leadership team and Early Learning Council on strategy development

- **Analyze** current State status

- **Benchmark** against national best practices

- **Collect** data relating to proposed criteria

- **Outreach** to experts, stakeholders, and appropriate working groups

- **Commence** short-term, critical projects to strengthen the application (Early Learning & Dev. Standards analysis, program standards analysis, data system alignment, etc.)

Who's doing What?

- Leadership Team for the application is:
  - Julie Smith
  - Harriet Meyer
  - Chris Koch
  - Michelle Saddler

- Workgroups are still being organized
  - Will draw upon existing "tables" where issues are discussed
 - Will meet in late August through mid September

More Next Steps

Stage	People
RFP Release (Aug 15?): Formulate strategies and preliminary plans	Leadership Team, ELC, workgroups, consultants
Feedback on draft plan	Stakeholders
Participation in national TA to improve application	Leadership Team, ELC, workgroups, consultants
Letters of support	Stakeholders

How You Can Provide Input

- Today's session

- Workgroups

- Website

- Contact Theresa or Jonathan

  - Thawley@wideopenwest.com

Some Reflections
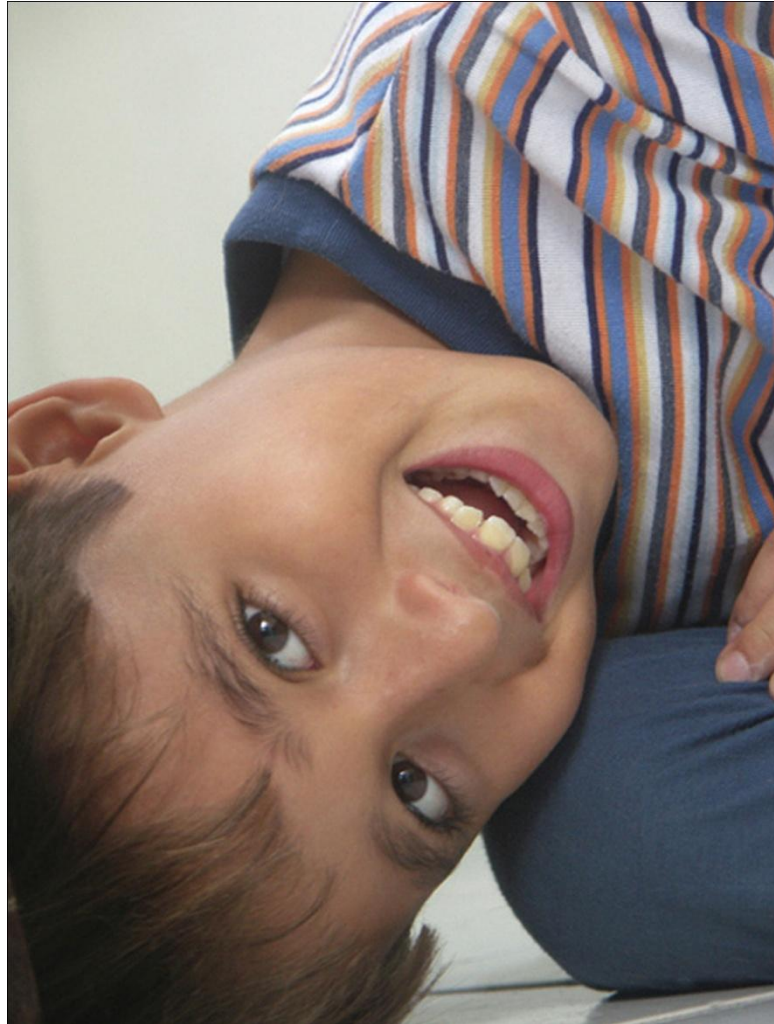
Winning the Challenge: For Today

Address some of the "big questions" so that we have a shared foundation from which we can develop Illinois' strategies

- Gain a shared understanding of the Challenge parameters and requirements

- Get momentum on four key strategic questions required in the Challenge

Today's Big Questions

1) What is our strategy for systemic improvement of program quality?

2) What will be our evidence of success when we have our statewide data system in place? What will people be able to:
   - start doing
   - do better
   - stop doing?

3) What constitutes a "high need" child?

4) What do we mean by community collaborations? To what extent should we include community collaboration as part of our implementation strategy?

Process:

1) Station Rotation

2) Clarifications

3) Consensus Testing

4) Minority Reports

Deliverable:

Inputs to the Application Leadership Team for decision making

Meeting Norms

1) Listen for understanding, respecting all viewpoints

2) Assume noble intentions

3) Communicate candidly and directly

4) Aim for understanding and commitment, not agreement